

Nicole Cooley

Breastfeeding at the Harvard Club

under a photo of TS Eliot and Vivian knocking cocktails together,
the baby and I one body, the baby twisting on my lap.

In the Commonwealth Room, under the gaze of the waiters,
the baby twists under the *Boston Globe* I've tented over us.

Try to think abstractions. Outside in the courtyard a fountain
choked with blinding silver white, the shiniest dimes.

Brunch drifts on without me into the afternoon, the baby twisting
my nipple until it burns. A buffet table, a tower of salmon and crushed

ice, champagne flutes. Try to think. My mind is a shuttered
window, snapped shut and sealed against light. I'll never return

to the table. While she feeds, the baby rests her fingers
on my tongue. I'll never return. I'm tired of the poet's own voice

but can't recall any others. Just an instrument, this body
my daughter knows. I haven't practiced. Eliot smiles and

sips his drink and I'd like to knock the careful circle of daisies
to the floor. I'd like to write about the club's Women's Entrance

Vivian used. I'd like to write about kept silence. I'd like
to flip on searchlights to sweep the elegant drawing room,

and set every corner burning. And here is my daughter's hand inside
my mouth. No metaphor can transport me into the

water of that fountain. Or inside the glittering display of ice.